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JIM LEACH

IOWA'S CONGRESSMAN
FOR THE FIRST DISTRICT

Reaction to Scowcroft Trip to China

Statement by Representative Jim Leach (R - IA)

December 11, 1989

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- "Partisan critics of the Administration are premature in their skeptical appraisal of the Scowcroft visit to Beijing.

"In the final measure, this high visibility gambit may be considered a test of the efficacy of outside parties helping extricate a proud nation from an embarrassing corner. Bush appears to be betting that an historically xenophobic China is more likely to temper its stridency at home and abroad if it isn't perceived to be capitulating to the pressure of foreign powers.

"This was thus a risky but thoughtful consultation, suggesting that a geostrategic dialogue can be continued in difficult times and that American interests and values can be advanced in low-key as well as publicly strenuous ways.

"If China significantly moderates over the course of the next year, Bush will be vindicated; if not, the Administration runs the danger of being perceived as helping to legitimize a less than legitimate regime in Beijing.

"Given the enormity of the change taking place in world politics, there has never been a more propitious time for a low-key professional to occupy the White House. In terms of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and our warming relations with Moscow, Bush is sending a signal that, while the United States is the world's greatest military power and preeminent symbol of Western values, a policy of going-it-alone is fraught with danger: either becoming isolated ourselves or seeking a perilous isolation of others.

"As the British historian B.H. Liddell Hart noted: 'Never corner an opponent, and always assist him to save his face. Put yourself in his shoes -- so as to see things through his eyes. Avoid self-righteousness like the devil -- nothing so self-blinding.'"

(Rep. Leach is the ranking Republican on the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee)